

# Cleanup of Soil Pollution Source Nearly Done

**Lockformer Site**  
Lisle, Illinois

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## For more information

If you want to learn more about the Lockformer site, you can contact these people:

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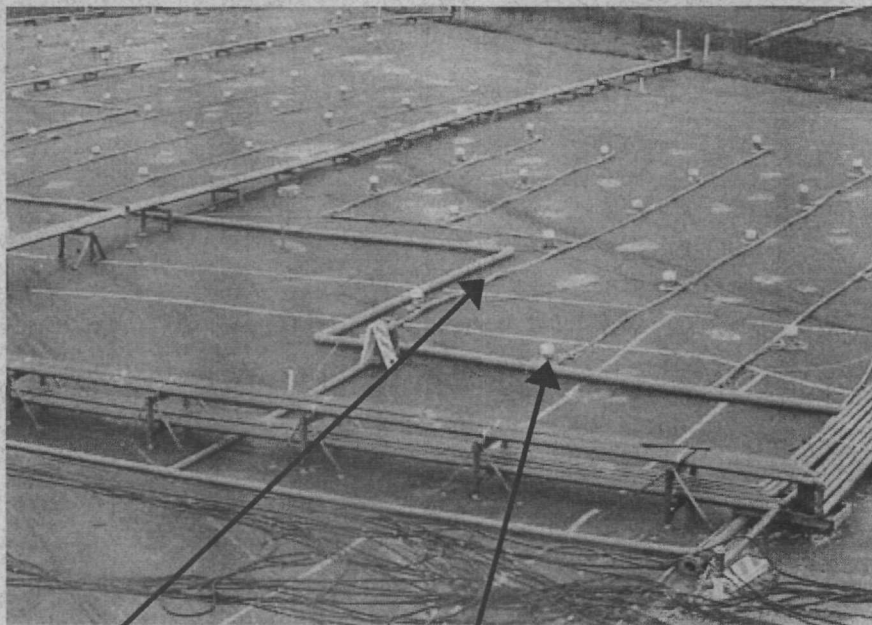
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*These cables have been removed and these white electrodes will be cut off two feet below the surface and filled with grout as the electric heating cleanup system is phased out. The gray piping used to clean hazardous soil vapor will remain.*

U.S. Environmental Agency has closed down one of its soil cleanup systems at the Lockformer site. The system successfully removed most of the pollution on the site, which was sitting in a layer of clay soil. A hazardous chemical called trichloroethylene, or TCE, was spilled for many years on Lockformer's property and also contaminated other soil layers and underground water supplies. Another system will continue to work on pollutants still present in a layer of sand and gravel on the site. Illinois EPA will continue to oversee the cleanup of the underground water supplies.

A technology called electrical resistive heating was used to remove about 2,000 pounds of TCE and other pollutants from the layer of clay soil. ERH works by heating soil with electricity to create steam that is carried to the surface where it is filtered and cleaned before release. The Lockformer cleanup represents the largest use of an ERH system in the Midwest. The TCE that was in the clay layer is believed to have been the main source of pollution. TCE also seeped into the sand and gravel layer and into the underground water supply. Testing by Illinois EPA in 2000-2001 showed that more than 150 private residential drinking wells were contaminated by TCE traced back to the Lockformer property. Illinois EPA asked EPA to help with removal of the source of the pollution, and the Lockformer Co. was ordered to pay for the cleanup of the dangerous chemicals on its property.

## Other parts of cleanup system still operating

EPA and Illinois EPA continue to oversee operation of the soil vapor extraction system used to clean the sand and gravel layer. SVE works by bringing contaminated vapor to the surface where it is cleaned by a filter.

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The vapor extraction system will continue to operate on several areas of the Lockformer property until the soil cleanup goals are met.

### Ground-water cleanup

Illinois EPA is also overseeing cleanup of the underground water pollution.

Although most residents in the area are now hooked up to a safe drinking water supply, contamination in the ground water is still being addressed. A number of technologies can be used to clean up the ground water, including letting natural processes clean up the remaining contamination. Once the source of the pollution is gone, the level of contamination in the ground water should not continue to increase. It is important to keep the ground water clean because in the future a growing population will likely need it (*see box*).

### Chicago metro area may need ground water in future

As they grew in population, many Chicagoland communities switched from ground water to Lake Michigan as the source of their drinking water. But suburbs' access to Lake Michigan water may be limited at some point in the future. According to a series of studies by the Illinois State Water Survey and the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission, it is likely ground water will again be needed as a source for drinking water because:

- Projections show the population of northeastern Illinois will continue to increase
- Withdrawals from the deep pools of underground water, called aquifers, are now at the aquifers' sustainable limits. That means water is being used from the aquifers at nearly the same pace as rain and snowmelt recharge them
- Water withdrawals from other aquifers may already be exceeding sustainable limits in some areas
- Chicago's Lake Michigan withdrawals were set by decree of the U.S. Supreme Court and by agreement with other Great Lakes states and Canada, but the lake allocation may not be increased to serve growing areas of the state

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